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SECURITY INFORMATION

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

7 January 1952

SUBJECT: TERMS OF REFERENCE: NIE-35/1: PROBABLE DEVELOPMENTS IN
INDOCHINA DURING THE FIRST SIX MONTHS OF 1952
(draft for Board consideration)

THE PROBLEM

To estimate probable developments in Indochina through mid-1952
with particular emphasis on probable Chinese Communist courses of action
in that area.

QUESTIONS BEARING ON THE PROBLEM

I. FACTORS INFLUENCING CHINESE COMMUNIST POLICY TOWARD INDOCHINA

- A. What is the current military situation in Indochina?
 1. What is the relative military strength, combat effectiveness and tactical position of the French-Vietnamese and Viet Minh forces?
 - a. How has the fighting in Tonkin during the past six months affected French-Vietnamese capabilities?
 - b. How has the fighting in Tonkin during the past six months affected Viet Minh capabilities?

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2. What is the present nature and level of Chinese Communist technical and materiel assistance to the Viet Minh?
- B. What trends in the capabilities of the Viet Minh forces are probable in the next six months?
 1. Assuming Chinese Communist assistance is not increased substantially over present levels?
 2. Assuming the Chinese Communists increase substantially their technical and materiel assistance over the next few months?
- C. What are the capabilities of the Chinese Communists to commit an increasing volume of assistance to the Viet Minh in the form of advisers, instructors, "volunteers," and materiel?
 1. Assuming present situation or an intensification of the fighting in Korea?
 2. Assuming an armistice in Korea?
- D. What are the capabilities of the Chinese Communists to commit major elements of their regular forces in Indochina?
 1. Assuming present situation or an intensification of the fighting in Korea?
 - a. What ground forces do the Chinese Communists have available for commitment to an invasion of Indochina? What is the level of training and equipment of these troops? How many troops can the Chinese Communists now support logistically in Indochina in sustained military operations?

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- b. What air strength could the Chinese Communists commit to such an invasion? What airfields are available or could be made available for operational use?
- c. What naval strength could the Chinese Communists commit to such an invasion?
- 2. Assuming an armistice in Korea?
 - a. How many troops could the Chinese Communists support logistically in Indochina in sustained military operations?
 - b. What air strength could the Chinese Communists commit to such an invasion?
 - c. What naval strength could the Chinese Communists commit to such an invasion?
- E. What are the relative French-Vietnamese capabilities to withstand attacks by:
 - 1. The Viet Minh alone, assuming a continuance of the present scale of Chinese Communist assistance?
 - 2. The Viet Minh alone, assuming a substantial increase in the scale of Chinese Communist assistance, including "volunteers" with the Viet Minh?
 - 3. The Viet Minh, assisted by major Chinese Communist regular forces?
- F. What trends in French-Vietnamese capabilities to resist Viet Minh-Chinese Communist pressure are probable through mid-1952?
 - 1. In manpower and materiel supply?

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2. In political strength and stability within Vietnam?
3. In the will to resist?
 - a. Psychological and economic developments within France?
 - b. Psychological and economic developments within Indochina?

G. What would be the influence on Chinese Communist courses of action with respect to Indochina of:

1. The situation in Korea?
2. The requirements of internal consolidation in Communist China?
3. A possible Chinese Communist belief that a more forward course in Indochina might incite UN or US counter-action in Indochina?
 - a. Substantially increased assistance to the Viet Minh, possibly including "volunteers" in Viet Minh units?
 - b. Commitment of regular Chinese Communist forces in organized units?
4. A possible Chinese Communist belief that a more forward course in Indochina might bring UN or US retaliation, including strategic bombing, against the China mainland?
 - a. Substantially increased assistance to the Viet Minh, possibly including "volunteers" in Viet Minh units?
 - b. Commitment of regular Chinese Communist forces in organized units?

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5. A significant improvement in the French-Vietnamese military and political position in Indochina?
6. Indications of French weakening of will to resist because of the economic and military strains on metropolitan France involved in a long-term and indecisive war in Indochina?
7. Developments elsewhere in Southeast Asia (for example, Burma) favorable to the Communists.

II. INDICATIONS OF CURRENT CHINESE COMMUNIST INTENTIONS WITH RESPECT TO INDOCHINA

- A. What indications may be derived from Communist military activity in Communist China and within Indochina?
- B. What indications may be derived from non-military events such as Communist (Soviet, Chinese Communist, Viet Minh) propaganda, the movement of Communist leaders, and the formation of joint Viet Minh-Chinese Communist cultural and/or military organizations?

III. PROBABLE CHINESE COMMUNIST COURSES OF ACTION WITH RESPECT TO INDOCHINA THROUGH MID-1952

(To be prepared by O/NE based on I and II above)

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